

Message Text

SECRET

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ORIGIN NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 SS-15 NSC-10 CIAE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 PRS-01 PM-09 DODE-00 L-03 IO-12

AF-10 EUR-25 INRE-00 /109 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/ ARN: DAKORN: JFC

22670 5/17/73

APPROVED BY NEA - MR. SISCO

NEA - MR. ATHERTON

NEA/ IAI - MR. STACKHOUSE

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O 171908 Z MAY 73

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 094444

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LE, IS

SUBJECT: MEETING OF MIXED ARMISTICE COMMISSION

REF: BEIRUT 5673

1. FOLLOWING RECEIPT REFTEL, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON TELEPHONED ISRAELI MINISTER IDAN AT NOON MAY 17 TO EXPRESS CONCERN OVER ADVERSE EFFECTS OF POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS ALONG LEBANESE- ISRAELI BORDER AT TIME PRESIDENT FRANGIE CARRYING ON DIFFICULT NEGOTIATIONS WITH FEDAYEEN. ATHERTON SAID HE WAS CALLING ON BEHALF OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY SISCO AND WHAT HE HAD TO SAY SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS BEING FROM SISCO TO AMBASSADOR DINITZ.

2. ATHERTON SAID WE HAVE MESSAGE FROM EMBASSY BEIRUT NOTING THAT LEBANESE ARMY UNITS HAVE BEEN WITHDRAWN FROM SOUTHERN BORDER IN ORDER TO STRENGTHEN POSITIONS IN BEIRUT
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AREA. REPORT INDICATES FEDAYEEN ARE TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THIS TO INFILTRATE BANDS INTO SOUTHERN BORDER AREA. SPECULATION IS THAT FEDAYEEN MAY SEEK TO PROVOKE INCIDENTS ALONG BORDER WITH ISRAEL IN ORDER TO EMBARRASS FRANGIE AT CURRENT DELICATE STAGE IN HIS NEGOTIATIONS WITH FEDAYEEN. ATHERTON SAID WE URGE THAT IF THERE SHOULD BE INCIDENTS AT THIS PARTICULARLY DELICATE TIME THERE NOT BE RETALIATION BY ISRAEL ACROSS BORDER. ATHERTON STRESSED THAT RETALIATION INSIDE LEBANON COULD DESTROY FRANGIE' S CHANCES OF GETTING AGREEMENT WHICH WOULD CURB FEDAYEEN.

3. IDAN ASKED RHETORICALLY WHAT ARE WE EXPECTED TO DO, ARE WE TO SIT BACK AND GET SHOT? ATHERTON SAID HE WAS NOT A MILITARY EXPERT AND COULD NOT GIVE TACTICAL ADVICE. HOWEVER, THERE ARE VARIOUS WAYS OF HANDLING SITUATION AND WE HOPE IT CAN BE HANDLED WITHOUT CROSSING BORDER. ATHERTON AGAIN EMPHASIZED DAMAGE THAT ISRAELI OPERATION IN LEBANON WOULD DO AT THIS STAGE OF NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN GOL AND FEDAYEEN. HE NOTED THAT LEBANESE ARMY IS ALREADY BEING ACCUSED OF TURNING ITS BACK TO " ENEMY" AND TAKING UP POSITIONS TO FIGHT " FELLOW ARABS." IDAN SAID MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THAT GOI IS NOT IN HABIT OF PUTTING ITS PEOPLE IN DANGER AND NOT REACTING; HE ADDED HE WAS SURE IDF WOULD REACT IN MOST APPROPRIATE WAY IF FEDAYEEN ATTACKS OCCURRED. ATHERTON SAID OUR REPORT INDICATES THAT FEDAYEEN ORGANIZATION SPECIFICALLY INVOLVED IS PFLP/ GC, AN EXTREMIST GROUP WHICH HAS BEEN ONE OF MAIN TROUBLEMAKERS IN FRANGIE' S ATTEMPT TO BRING SITUATION UNDER CONTROL.

4. IDAN ASKED WHETHER LEBANESE KNOW USG SPEAKING TO ISRAEL ON THIS MATTER. ATHERTON SAID NO, WE ARE DOING THIS BETWEEN USG AND GOI, AND ON OUR OWN INITIATIVE. GOL IS WORRIED RE SITUATION, BUT WE ARE EXPRESSING OUR OWN INDEPENDENT CONCERN. WE BELIEVE PRESIDENT FRANGIE IS DOING WELL IN HIS EFFORTS TO BRING FEDAYEEN UNDER CONTROL BUT AS ATHERTON HAD ALREADY SAID ARE CONCERNED ABOUT EFFECTS OF BORDER INCIDENTS ON NEGOTIATIONS CURRENTLY TAKING PLACE IN BEIRUT. WHAT FRANGIE TRYING TO ACCOMPLISH IS IN ISRAELI AND US INTERESTS AS WELL, AND
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WE ARE ASKING GOI GIVE WEIGHT TO THESE BROADER CONSIDERATIONS. IDAN SAID HE WOULD REPORT OUR APPROACH. RUSH

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** SECRET

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PFOR
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 MAY 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973STATE094444
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: DAKORN: JFC
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GDS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: SECSTATE WASHDC
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730546/aaaajhsf.tel
Line Count: 112
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ORIGIN N
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 73 BEIRUT 5673
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 DEC 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <27-Dec-2001 by shawdg>; APPROVED <16-Jan-2002 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> mcm 980217
Subject: MEETING OF MIXED ARMISTICE COMMISSION
TAGS: PFOR, IS, LE
To: BEIRUT
JERUSALEM
TEL AVIV
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005